

Regular Town Council Meeting

April 11, 2023

Mayor Sulka called the meeting to order at 5 P.M. Council members present were Larry Toomer, Bridgette Frazier, Fred Hamilton, and Dan Wood. Town Manager Stephen Steese, Assistant Town Manager Heather Colin, Chief of Police Joe Babkiewicz, Town Clerk Kimberly Gammon, Interim Town Clerk Kerry Guzman and Town Attorney Richardson LaBruce were also present.

The pledge and invocation were given by Bridgette Frazier.

Adoption of the Agenda

Wood made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Toomer seconded.

Adoption of the Minutes

Regular Meeting Minutes of March 14, 2023

Toomer made a motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 14, 2023, as presented. Hamilton seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Presentations, Celebrations and Recognitions

Mayor Sulka acknowledged the Beaufort County School District Student of the Month, Brayden Burnham, a 1st grader from Red Cedar Elementary, for the character traits of honesty and integrity.

Mayor Sulka read and presented the Child Abuse Awareness Month Proclamation to Hopeful Horizons and Child Abuse Prevention Association.

Mayor Sulka read and presented the Fair Housing Month Proclamation.

Mayor Sulka read and presented the Arbor Day Proclamation which was accepted by John Bowen.

Mayor Sulka read and presented the Native Plant Proclamation which was accepted by Corinne Reeves.

Don Ryan Center Update - David Nelems, CEO. Nelems stated that since his last update in October, the Center has added more companies. He introduced Paul Arvantides, the Vice President of Innovation. Nelems provided updates on the programs, membership and mentorship. The "How I Built It" series was discussed with Greg Parker launching the series. The Business Health Check has been implemented which is a 20 question test for a business.

There are currently 12 companies and looking to add two to four more in the next 60 days.

Mayor Sulka recognized Kimberly Gammon, Town Clerk, for her years of service to the Town of Bluffton as this was Gammon's last meeting working for the Town.

Mayor Sulka also recognized Dan Wood for receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Greater Bluffton Chamber of Commerce.

Public Comment

Skip Hoagland, 61 Sparwheel Lane, Hilton Head Island - Hoagland discussed his public comment at the March meeting and his previous lawsuit with Mayor Sulka.

Barry Ginn, 138 Pinecrest Circle, Bluffton - Ginn spoke about his concerns with the Chamber of Commerce and the tax dollars that they are being allotted. Ginn was appalled of the actions others had at the previous meeting that put others in danger.

Lynn Greeley, 8 Wax Myrtle Lane, Hilton Head Island - Greeley approached the podium and presented a document that she stated was a Power of Attorney and that she wished to give her three-minute speaking period to Skip Hoagland. Town Attorney LaBruce reviewed the Public Comment rules. Hoagland was told that he would not be permitted to speak a second time per the Town of Bluffton's Public Comment Rules and Protocols. Hoagland was escorted out of Council Chambers Bluffton Police for disrupting a public meeting.

Sharon Brown, 163 Buck Island Road, Bluffton - Brown discussed her concerns about the drainage ditches on Buck Island Road and the safety of the bridge walkway. Brown spoke about her concerns with the MOA with the Bluffton Eagle Action Committee.

Jack Gaido, 13 Princeton Circle, Hilton Head Island - Gaido asked why Hoagland's concerns aren't addressed behind closed doors instead of Public Comment.

Communications from Mayor and Council

Mayor Sulka stated that it was Heritage Week and reviewed how a Hilton Head Island event impacts the Town.

Formal Agenda Items

Consideration of Ordinance Amending Chapter 6 – Businesses and Business Regulations to add Division 1 – Local Business Licenses and Division 2 – Business Licenses for Insurers, Brokers, and Telecommunication Providers to Article II – Business Licenses and Regulations, Authorizing and Directing the Town of Bluffton to Enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement Relating to South Carolina Revenue Services; to Participate in one or more Local Revenue Service Programs, to Execute and Deliver One or More Participant Program Supplements, and other Matters Relating Thereto - Natalie Majorkiewicz, CGFO, Assistant Director of Finance - First Reading

Majorkiewicz stated that the Municipal Association of South Carolina requires the Town to enact the proposed ordinance and sign updated agreements in order to continue to participate in the programs now known as the Local Revenue Services. The Second and Final Reading will happen at the May 9, 2023 Town Council meeting.

Toomer made a motion to approve an Amendment to Town of Bluffton Code of Ordinances, Chapter 6, Business and Business Regulations, adding Division 1. – Local Business Licenses and Division 2. – Business Licenses for Insurers, Brokers, and Telecommunications Providers to add Article II, Business Licenses and Regulations, Authorizing and Directing the Town of Bluffton to Enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement Relating to South Carolina Revenue Services; to Participate in one or more Local Revenue Service Programs, to Execute and Deliver One or More Participant Program Supplements, and other Matters Relating Thereto. Frazier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval to Authorize a Construction Contract with Southern Palmetto Landscapes Inc. for Landscape Improvements at the Oyster Factory Park Parking Lot (Fiscal Impact \$106,030.47) – Kimberly Washok-Jones, Director of Projects and Watershed Resilience

Jones reviewed the Oyster Factory Park plan. Southern Palmetto Landscaping was the lowest bidder for the landscape improvements at the new Oyster Factory Park parking lot.

Wood made a motion to approve authorizing the Town Manager to enter into a construction contract with Southern Palmetto Landscaping Inc for landscape improvements at the Oyster Factory Park for \$106,030.47, plus a 15% contingency. Hamilton seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval to Authorize a Construction Contract with Hilton Head Landscapes for Hardscape and Landscape Development adjacent to the Rotary Community Center (Fiscal Impact \$129,702.54) – Kimberly Washok-Jones, Director of Projects and Watershed Resilience

Jones reviewed the concept plan and the landscape and hardscape enhancements that were to be included. Hilton Head Landscapes was the lowest bidder.

Toomer made a motion to approve authorizing the Town Manager to enter into a construction contract with Hilton Head Landscapes for hardscape and landscape development adjacent to the Rotary Community Center for \$129,702.54, plus a 15% contingency. Frazier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Consideration of a Resolution Authorizing Initiation of Legal Proceedings Supporting Construction of Historic District Sewer Extensions - Kimberly Washok-Jones, Director of Projects and Watershed Resilience

Jones reviewed the May River Watershed Action Plan and Sewer Connection and Extension Policy. Jones provided an update on sewer quitclaim deeds for phases one through six. If Staff is unable to obtain voluntary execution of a quitclaim deed by an impacted property owner, the Town can pursue a "quiet title" action and/or a condemnation action to acquire a title. Jones discussed the Quiet Title process and steps.

There was discussion about the history of the ghost roads and why the Town is trying to acquire the necessary titles.

Toomer made a motion to approve to adopt a resolution authorizing the Town Attorney to initiate legal proceedings to confirm title to certain rights of way in Bluffton as necessary to construct Historic District Sewer Extension Phases 4 through 6. Frazier seconded. Hamilton opposed. The motion passed with a four/one vote.

Consent Agenda Items

1. Monthly Department Reports: Police, Finance and Administration, Human Resources, Municipal Court, Projects and Watershed Resilience, Public Services, Don Ryan Center for Innovation, and Growth Management
2. Town Manager Monthly Report

3. Consideration of Planning Commission Recommendation for Fiscal Year 2024 Capital Improvement Program Projects Prioritization - Kimberly Washok-Jones, Director of Projects and Watershed Resilience
4. May River Watershed Action Plan Advisory Committee Recommendation for Town Council Consideration to Establish a Green Space Policy and Program - Kimberly Washok-Jones, Director of Projects and Watershed Resilience
16. Consideration of a Resolution to Affirm the Continued Dedication of the Town of Bluffton to Fair Housing Principles and Regulations Established by the State of South Carolina and the United States Federal Government – Kevin Icard, Director of Growth Management

Toomer made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Wood seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Wood made a motion to adjourn at 6:11 PM. Hamilton seconded.